

IRISH NATIONAL OPERA
present

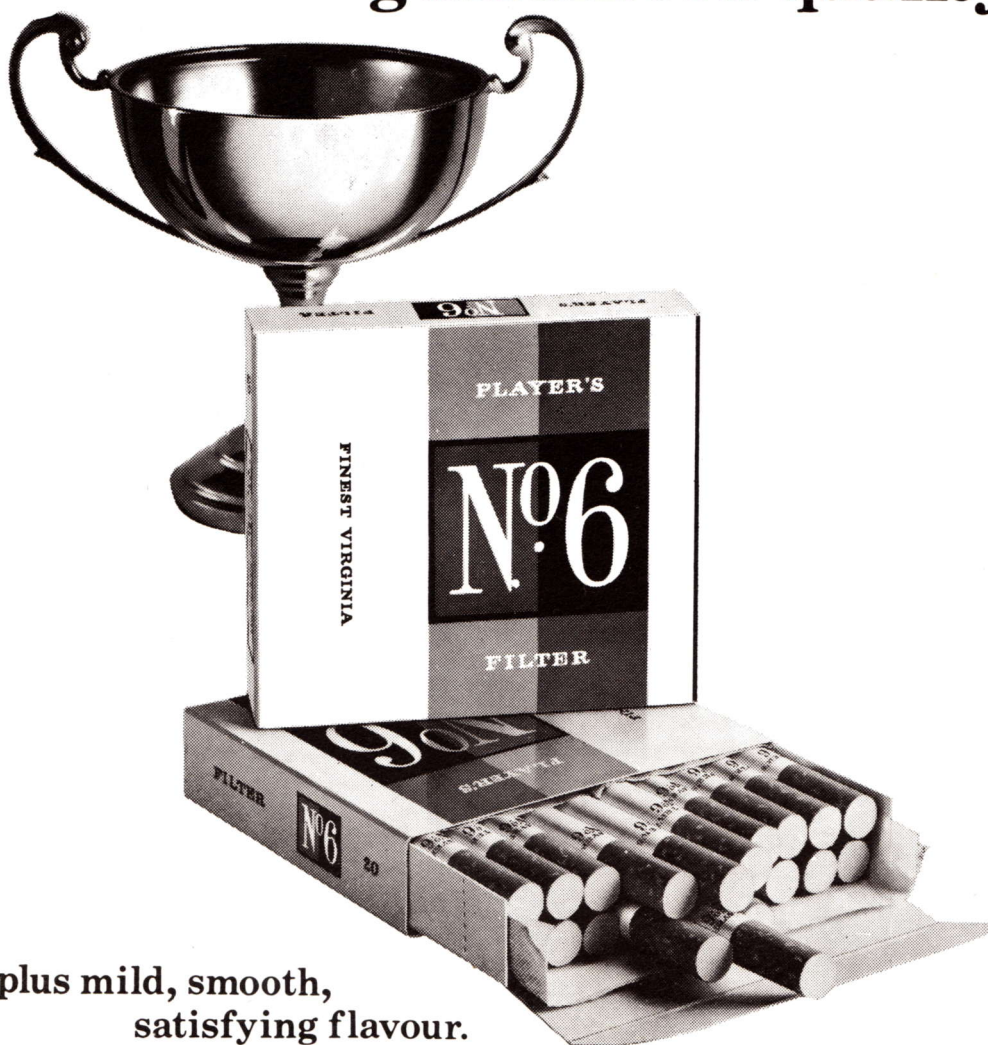
DON PASQUALE

Opera in Three Acts by Gaetano Donizetti
(English version E. J. Dent)

Player Wills Theatre
South Circular Road

Wednesday 17th, Friday 19th, Saturday 20th October, 1973.

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DON PASQUALE

Cast

Don Pasquale	Joseph Dalton
Doctor Malatesta	Brian Kissane
Ernesto	...	...	Brendan Cavanagh
Norina	...	...	Anne Cant
Waiter)		
Notary	)	...	Brendan Keyes
Butler)		
Servant	...	...	Tom Hanahoe

Music Director
VERONICA McSWINEY

Production
PADDY RYAN

Stage Management
CHRISTINE CAFFERKY, TOM HANAHOE
BRIAN CONWAY

Settings
KEN EDWARDS

I.N.O. Manager
TONY O DALAIGH

These performances were made possible
through the generous help of
AN COMHAIRLE EALAION

Don Pasquale

Don Pasquale has selected a spouse for his nephew Ernesto who, however, is still determined to wed his beloved Norina. Despite his age, Don Pasquale decides to get married himself and to disinherit Ernesto. The family friend, Doctor Malatesta, takes a hand in the affair with interesting results.

Act I : Outside a cafe near Don Pasquale's house — morning.

INTERVAL — 15 minutes

Act II : Scene 1 —
A room in Don Pasquale's house that afternoon.

Scene 2 —
The same — next day, evening.

INTERVAL — 15 minutes

Act III: The garden — that night.

Irish National Opera are deeply indebted to AN CHOMHAIRLE EALAION and FORAS EIREANN for their continued financial support.

Thanks are also due to the DOROTHY MAYER FOUNDATION who provided a trailer for the transport of settings, the IRISH FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS for rehearsal facilities and the MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND who made the Mayer Piano available for some performances.

NO SMOKING IN THE AUDITORIUM PLEASE

Irish National Opera

Irish National Opera was founded to give Irish singers the opportunity of undertaking major operatic roles, to bring opera to provincial centres and to foster an interest in opera among the younger generation.

Details of activities to date —

OPERA	PERFORMANCES
The Marriage of Figaro	35
La Boheme	20
Fidelio	1
Don Giovanni	43
Barber of Seville	41
Twelfth Night	3
Don Pasquale	26
Operatic Concerts	30

In all, I.N.O. have visited over sixty venues in twenty-eight counties.

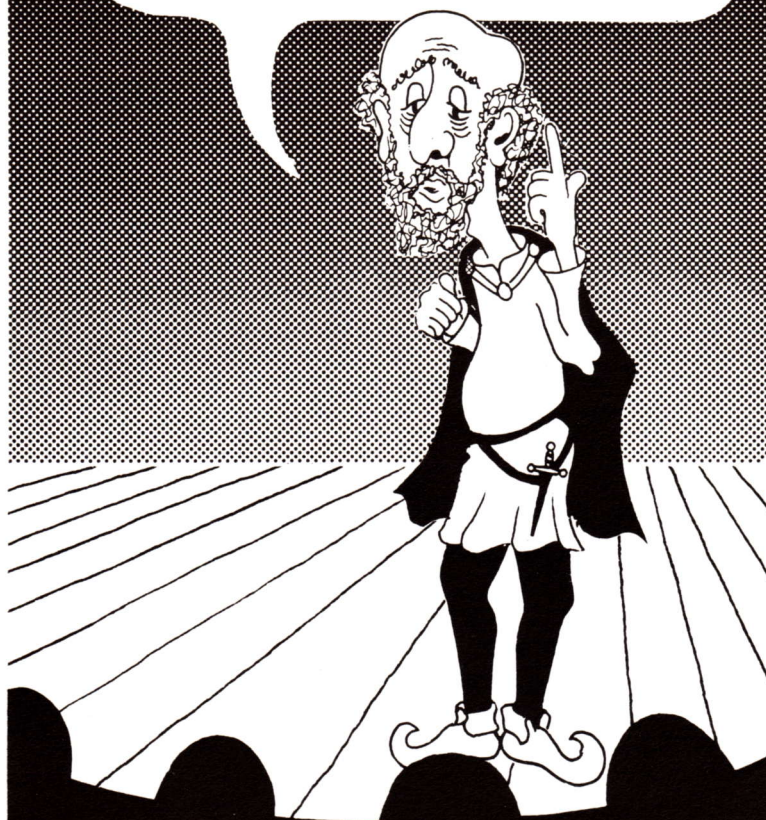
Artists who have appeared with the company

include Dolores Burke, Anne Cant, Maureen Dillon, Veronica Dunne, Olive Jones, Bene McAteer, Mabel McGrath, Veronica McSwiney, Ruth Maher, Anne Makower, Ann Moran, Celine Murphy, Winifred O'Dea, Mary Sheridan, Olive Simpson, Violet Twomey, Brendan Cavanagh, Richard Cooper, Joseph Dalton, Martin Dempsey, Gerald Duffy, Edwin FitzGibbon, Courtney Kenny, Brendan Keyes, Brian Kissane, Peter McBrien, John O'Connor, Michael O'Dea, Colman Pearce, Patrick Ring and William Young.

Organisations or individuals interested in being associated with performances in their areas are invited to contact:-

Tony O'Dalaigh
159 Sutton Park, Co.Dublin.
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Opera west of the Shannon

SUSAN NICASSIO went "on tour" with the Irish National Opera to watch them at work bringing an English language version of Donizetti's "Don Pasquale" to the town of Boyle.

Friday, 2.30 p.m.: Gerry Duffy, Brendan Cavanagh and I set off by car from Dublin for Boyle for a Friday performance of Don Pasquale and then on to Sligo for Saturday. This is one of six week-end tours before Christmas for the Irish National Opera. Another season will begin in January.

Gerry is one of the INO directors, and one of the singers with the company who is a full-time professional musician. Brendan is a calm and quite-spoken tenor — though for anyone who works with tenors that sounds like a contradiction in terms!

As we drive through the rich, green farming country of the midlands, Gerry tries to explain the company to me.

"We're a professional company, in the sense that the singers are paid, though very few of us earn our living from opera".

This is more a reflection on the financial position of music in Ireland than on the quality of the singers, which is uniformly high.

Another INO company is preparing Rossini's "Cinderella" for performance in early 1974.

They rehearse at night in Dublin drawing-rooms and basements under their producer, Paddy Ryan, carefully and meticulously building up the details of their performance, translating the printed opera score into a living music drama. They tour at weekends and seasonally have limited "runs" in bigger centres such as Cork, Galway and Waterford.

The INO has performed in over 60 venues in 28 counties.

By Monday morning most of the cast and crew will be back in Dublin, at their everyday jobs. But now the weekend is before us, and they are no longer Dublin workers, they are an opera company.

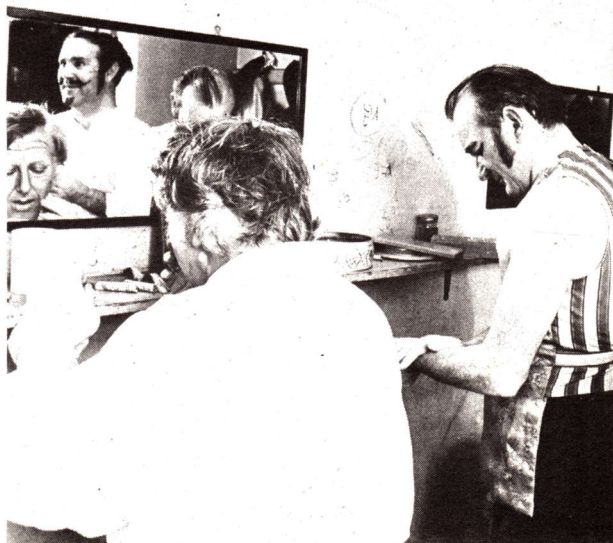
Talking with Gerry and Brendan, I get the impression that their approach to opera must be similar to that of an Italian provincial touring company — opera as the entertainment it was meant to be, rather than the arid status symbol it so often becomes.

The INO, I am told, always performs in English, for the simple, but profound reason that they believe opera was written to be enjoyed, and you can hardly enjoy something if you can't understand it.

5.30: In the hall where the night's performance is to take place the basketball rings are laid against the stage apron, and someone is industrially chalking numbers onto the backs of chairs.

The stage crew, Christine Cafferky, Tom Hanahoe and Brian Conway, are transforming the provincial stage into a garden, an ornate parlour, a street in Rome, Trees, furniture and a painted cafe materialise from the small trailer they have driven from Dublin that morning, and we search through backdrops for something that will do for Act I.

A street scene in Italy? The main street of Boyle is unfurled, and its perfect. Boyle, in more ways than



one, is destined to become a small Italian town that night.

Supervising it all, and seemingly everywhere at once, is Tony Ó Dálaigh, a founder and director of the company, who also functions as tour manager, stage hand, lighting man and general whirlwind of energy.



* * *

6.45: The cast and crew meet at our hotel for a meal before the 8.30 performance. We are twelve now — Gerry, Brendan, Tony, Christine, Tom, Brian and myself, plus Ann Cant, tonight's Norina; Joe Dalton who sings Don Pasquale; Brian Kissane, the Dr. Malatesta; Brendan Keyes who sings three small parts and Veronica McSwiney, the pianist and the INO musical director.

Conversation winds down, there is an unspoken tension growing. Tony Ó Dálaigh, who seems to be sitting down only because he had to in order to eat, tries to explain to me the financial working of the company.

"We work through local organisations in each town we visit. They pay part of the expenses, through ticket receipts, and a small Arts Council grant covers the rest". In common with any such group, there is a constant crisis about money.

"If we had more sponsors we could put on more operas — it's as simple as that".

8.15: It is a communal dressing-room, because the Ladies is locked. Christine and I huddle around Ann Cant and zip her dress, while on the other side of the large room the gentlemen struggle into their costumes and search for make-up kits.

Tony Ó Dálaigh pokes his head through the door. "Three minutes!" he warns, and the scrambling becomes more intense.

"What lies at the bottom of the sea and quivers?" Joe Dalton quips, and then answers himself with "A nervous wreck". No one laughs — laughing is hard on the voice, and the whole subject is too sensitive.

And someone can't resist delivering the standing INO joke — "It doesn't look like we're going to get that elephant for Aida".

Brendan Cavanagh has as usual finished before anyone else, and sits with his hands clasped, thoughtfully tapping his heels. There is random finger-snapping and a scale or two in the dressing room as the last sashes are knotted, the final age lines drawn on faces, the last strands of hair pushed into place.

* * *

8.35: The opening characters take their places on stage. Joe Dalton, as Don Pasquale, settles himself into his chair, and Brendan Keyes, in his first of three roles this evening, walks up and down.

"I have to make all three characters very different", he says seriously. Then, almost embarrassed at



taking it so seriously, he shrugs "Ah well, it's all great fun, anyway".

* * *

8.40: In the hall as the lights go down I watch the audience. It's up to them, now.

"An audience is like a mirror", Gerry Duffy says in an undertone. "If they pick up what's on stage and reflect it back, then the whole thing comes to life".

Shopkeepers, farmers' wives, students and teachers — the people of Boyle are waiting to be entertained.

The men whose wives have dragged them to the opera are dubious and long-suffering; the students are trying to remember what they've heard in their music classes; an older generation smiles at the memory of heavy black records kept as a family treasure in the parlour for a special Sunday afternoon treat.



On stage, the singers are not the people I knew in the dressing room at all. Big, jovial Joe Dalton has been transformed into a bright-eyed, rubber-faced old sprite, Don Pasquale; tiny, blond Ann Cant's Norina is clear and sure; Brendan Cavanagh's ringing tenor voice fills the hall; and Brian Kissane's Doctor Malatesta controls the whole situation like a puppet master holding the strings.

A story unfolds — a simple universal story about an old man who takes a young wife, lovers refused permission to wed, mistaken identities and disguises, and a clever doctor who engineers the whole complex and funny business in a happy ending. And through it all, the music of Donizetti sparkles, from Veronica McSwiney at the piano to the voices on stage and out into the hall.

Halfway back in the hall a man who had settled in



with a martyred air is now roaring with laughter and his wife is shushing him, both embarrassed and pleased. Two teenagers are giggling over their packet of crisps, and one says "This is great, I'm glad I came".

The mirror is reflecting, and a work composed 150 years ago in Italy is coming to life in a small town west of the Shannon.

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Photos: John Morris*

DON PASQUALE

Comedy in Opera derives from the Commedia dell'Arte of 16th century Italy and with the inevitable exceptions, the history of operatic comedy is Italian, ranging from the little operas of early 18th century Naples to the climax of Verdi's "Falstaff" at the end of the last century. Highlighting their period in between are the talents of Rossini, Donizetti and Mozart.

Donizetti's greatest successes in the style — "Le Fille du Regiment", "L'Elisir D'Amore" and "Don Pasquale" — are among the best examples of the type. Donizetti is unique in that he successfully combined the humour of the opera buffs with the grace and line of the bel canto writing of the period. All his characters are human, likeable and full of heart; the situations are such as to invite audience participation and the vocal line indicative of the era of the artists for whom he was writing.

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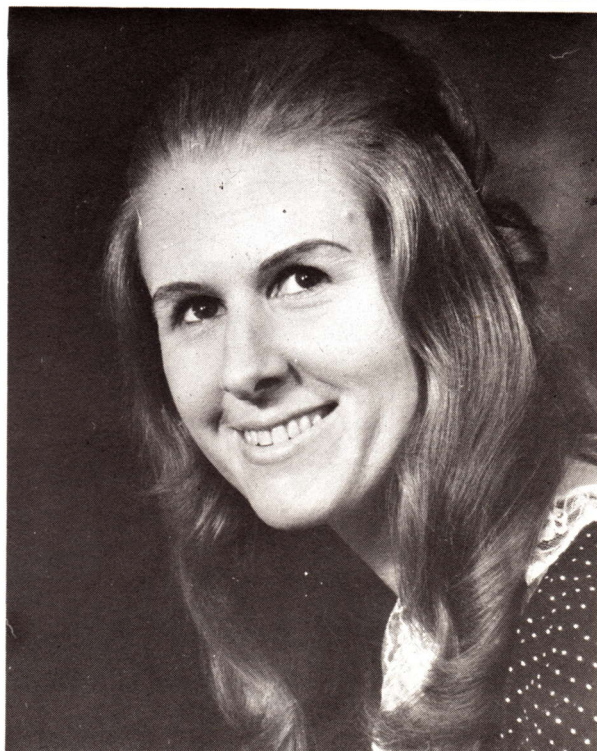
He was fortunate in that the cast for whom he specifically wrote "Don Pasquale" — Grisi, Mario, Tamburini and Lablache — were amongst the greatest singers of the age (many would say of any age). They were the leaders of the group called the Vieille Gardé who were responsible for the setting up of the

Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden in 1847, the lineal ancestor of the present Covent Garden Opera.

The first night of "Don Pasquale" at the Theatre des Italiens in Paris in 1843 was an outstanding success and since then Don Pasquale has held the stage in all countries of the world.



Producer: PADDY RYAN



Music Director: VERONICA Mc SWINEY

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'CINDERELLA'

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTION

'Cinderella' by Rossini will be the next INO production. It will be given at Player Wills Theatre on 17, 18, 19 January 1974 with the following cast:

Angelina	Suzanne Murphy
Clorinda	Eileen Donlon
Tisbe	Celine Murphy
Ramiro	Patrick Ring
Dandini	Peter McBrien
Magnifico	Brian Kissane
Alidoro	Gerald Duffy

Music Preparation —

Veronica Mc Swiney, Paul Dorgan, Courtney Kenny & Margaret Ni Shúilleabháin

Production by
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